

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 6 as follows.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (*Withdrawn*) A method for the vacuum packaging of articles including at least the steps of:

creating a plurality of recesses in a backing board;

positioning at least one article on said backing board;

placing a film substantially over said at least one article; and

using a vacuum packaging machine to substantially package at least one article, said at least one article being situated between the backing board and the film, wherein the thickness of the backing board is at least 2mm.

2. (*Withdrawn*) A method for the vacuum packaging of articles as claimed in claim 1 wherein said method further comprises the step of applying a bonding agent to said backing board.

3. (*Withdrawn*) A method for the vacuum packaging of articles as claimed in claim 2 wherein said bonding agent is applied to one face of said backing board.

4. (*Withdrawn*) A method for the vacuum packaging of articles as claimed in claim 2 wherein said bonding agent is air dried.

5. (*Withdrawn*) A packaged article, the article being packaged between a backing board and a film, wherein the backing board has a thickness of at least 2mm and the backing board further has a plurality of recesses therein.

6. (*Currently Amended*) A method for the vacuum packaging of at least one article ~~articles~~ including at least the steps of:

creating a ~~plurality of recesses~~ at least one recess in a backing board;

applying a bonding agent to the backing board but not in a region adjacent to and extending around an area to be occupied by said at least one article;

positioning at least one article on the backing board in said area;

placing a film substantially over the at least one article; and

using a vacuum packaging machine to substantially package the at least one article, the at least one article being situated between the backing board and the film, wherein the thickness of the backing board is at least 2mm;

~~the method being characterised by applying a bonding agent adapted to cause the film to bond with said backing board to the backing board and by preventing the film from bonding with the backing board in a region adjacent to and extending around the or each article.~~

7. (*Previously Presented*) A method in Claim 6, wherein the bonding agent is air dried before the film is bonded to the backing board.

8. (*Previously Presented*) A method as claimed in Claim 6, comprising heating the film to cause the film to bond with the backing board.

9. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 6, comprising heating the film and applying suction to a face of the backing board opposite the article(s), substantially simultaneously so that the bonding agent causes the film to bond with the backing board around the or each article to substantially seal in the or each article.

10. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the step of preventing the film from bonding with the backing board is achieved by applying the bonding agent to only part of the surface of the backing board.

C I 11. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the bonding agent is not applied to a region where an article is to be positioned, said region being greater than a corresponding cross section of the article.

can't 12. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the step of preventing the film from bonding with the backing board is achieved by masking the bonding agent in those regions where the film is not to bond with the backing board.

13. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 6, comprising applying an ink to the backing board.

14. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein ink is applied to the surface of the backing board to which bonding agent has been applied, the bonding agent having been allowed to dry before the ink is applied, the ink being applied to the areas of the backing board on which the or each article is intended to be placed.

15. *(Previously Presented)* A method as claimed in Claim 14, wherein the ink is applied to the backing board by printing means so as to provide the backing board with

the shape of the or each article superimposed in ink thereupon, the or each superimposed ink shape being greater in area than a corresponding cross-section of the associated article.

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16. (*Previously Presented*) A method as claimed in Claim 15, wherein digital photography is used in the printing of the shape(s) on the backing board.

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17. (*Previously Presented*) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the recesses are created on the backing board by punching holes at least part way thereinto.

18. (*Previously Presented*) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the recesses are created before the application of the bonding agent.--
